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OUR ABORIGINES



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THIS PUBLICATION SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH "ASSIMILATION OF OUR ABORIGINES" (1958), "FRINGE DWELLERS" (1959), "THE SKILLS OF OUR ABORIGINES" (1960), "ONE PEOPLE" (1961) and "THE ABORIGINES AND YOU" (1963)



Prepared under the authority of the Minister for Territories, with the co-operation of the Ministers responsible for Aboriginal welfare in the Australian States, for use by the National Aborigines' Day Observance Committee and its associates in connexion with the celebration of National Aborigines' Day in Australia, 12th July, 1957, and revised and re-issued for National Aborigines' Day, 8th July, 1962. Reprinted March, 1963. Revised and re-issued July, 1964.

Our Aborigines

Who are They?

PRECISE knowledge of the origins of our Aborigines is lacking and theories vary. But it seems probable that the Australoid race, of which the Aborigines are representative and which conforms with none of the world's three main racial groups, originated many thousands of years ago in the islands north of Australia. Hunters and food-gatherers, men and women of this race probably moved slowly northwards (notably to Malaya and India where pockets of them still survive in remote fastnesses), southwards to New Guinea (where they developed into new racial sub-groups), and to Australia. In Australia, undisturbed for many centuries, they preserved their original racial type substantially unchanged. From their first land-falls—on Cape York and thence elsewhere in the north—they spread around the coastline and, probably by way of the great river systems, across the continent.

They were never numerous in Australia. In 1788 (when the first European settlement was established) their numbers probably did not exceed 300,000. But we do not know how many centuries it took for their population to achieve that figure. They were completely dependent upon the unimproved natural resources of the country. They sometimes used infanticide and other methods to keep their numbers in balance with their water and food supply.

Our Aborigines did not build permanent homes. In many areas they slept and rested in the open, small fires burning beside them through the night if they needed warmth. Some groups, it is true, built huts of saplings and mud (though mainly to escape mosquitoes). Most, however, merely bundled saplings and branches together into wurlies or made primitive lean-to shelters of bark sheets or bushes (far less formal shelters than those of some of the creatures they hunted).

This did not mean, however, that their lives lacked all forms of physical permanence. Each tribe (there were about 500 tribes), and each group within each tribe, recognized each other's tribal and group areas. Not only were these their hunting and food-gathering areas—on them they centred their ceremonial and "dream" lives and within and through them maintained their social ties. But inside these areas they lived a nomadic existence, wandering in search of food, practising no form of agriculture or animal husbandry, pitting themselves so ceaselessly against their environment that they developed amazing skills in tracking, hunting, finding water and all else that was necessary in order to live.

Their life left them little room for material possessions (which, indeed, were an encumbrance to them). Generally they wore no



**Aboriginal wurlies. In their tribal state
Aborigines did not build permanent homes**

clothes—or only a skin cloak. Their few personal goods were related to the practical or ceremonial purpose of their days—for example, the digging stick, the dilly bag for carrying food, the drone instrument known as the didjeridoo. Their weapons and tools (varying according to areas) were the boomerang, the barbed wooden spear, the throwing stick, the stone axe and chisel, the club, the net, the trap, the pointed yam stick. Their weapons, however, became not merely their means of survival but the expression of a most remarkable skill and precision in construction, the vehicles of many of their art forms, symbols of magic and religious significance and, with the hunt itself, parts of their fundamental religious and social patterns. The designs (of circles, wavy lines and herringbone patterns) with which the weapons were often ornamented were usually those appearing on the sacred symbols used in the religious life. They could only be worked by fully initiated men. They were held to endow the weapons with the magic which came from the spirit world, the mystical beings responsible for the creation, and the traditional heroes of the Aborigines. Into the field also the hunter might take with him magic objects to guide his weapons (but the game obtained through these might only be eaten by fully initiated men). Such men also would perform the totemic ceremonies designed to ensure the plentiful game and good natural conditions the hunter sought.

Totemic ceremonies were also the link between the daily social life of the Aborigines and the secret life of myth and ritual—the secret life into which only the initiates might enter (often only after painful ordeals) in which man was brought into touch with the invisible things of the world of the past, present and future. In their more important phases only men could take part in these and the old men of the tribes were the custodians of the religious secrets.



Pintubi youths eating honey-ants, north of Mt. Liebig, Northern Territory

At many points allied with and springing from the religious background of their life were the institutions and social organization of the Aborigines. Here again the tribal elders were the guardians and the teachers. Far from being unrestricted, the Aboriginal life was strictly disciplined by various social institutions and by involved kinship rules. With food and other necessities of life the young and vigorous were required to provide for the old and feeble.

Within the aboriginal society death was the most significant event. It evoked wild outbursts of mourning. In some places the dead man's goods were publicly burned. The disposal of the corpse might take several months. The death (except for such as death in battle) was usually regarded as the work of some other person who would be diligently sought by magic means. The whole camp might be moved after a death.

Nevertheless, the Aborigines were neither gloomy nor oppressed with witchcraft and magic. Singing and dancing were part of their lives. Around their fires in their crude shelters, in natural clearings, or in specially designed areas, men and women came together in

their dances freely and often (far from confining their dances to the secret occasions in which, for the most part, only men might participate).

These then were the Aborigines in their natural state: few in numbers; racially apart from the rest of the world; nomads; naked hunters and food-gathers; houseless; artists in primitive forms; mystical; enclosed within firm and intricate social patterns; in a measure stone-age men who had nevertheless fitted themselves to survive where only the wild animals of the Australian bush and desert could survive besides themselves.

Where are They Now?

It is assessed that there are now about 100,000 Aborigines or part-Aborigines living in Australia. Queensland has an estimated 11,445 Aborigines, some 27,994 part-Aborigines, and 7,250 Torres Strait Islanders; in New South Wales there are only 235 Aborigines and 13,363 part-Aborigines; in Victoria there are about 3,000 part-Aborigines; South Australia has a little over 2,000 Aborigines and

Old men of the tribes are the masters of ceremonial and the teachers through whom the sacred laws and myths are passed down from generation to generation



4,000 part-Aborigines; in Western Australia there are about 8,872 Aborigines and 8,160 part-Aborigines of whom an estimated 2,000 are nomads beyond the confines of civilization; in the Northern Territory there are about 18,200 Aborigines and more than 2,000 part-Aborigines

These numbers (even allowing for those part-Aborigines who have passed into the general community) represent a big decline in the Aboriginal population since 1788. From the dawn of history this appears to have been the fate of an aboriginal population in face of an invasion of people stronger and more numerous than themselves. What happened to the Ancient Britons, the primitive pagans of the Russian steppes, and the North American Indians centuries earlier began to happen to the Australian Aboriginal.

Neither the new settlers nor the Aborigines initially bore the other ill-will. But neither had time or the understanding to adjust themselves to the new conditions before these brought both together in sharp clashes. The newcomers could see no signs of villages, gardens or centralized organization. In the absence of these outward signs of the Aboriginal culture, and ignorant of the native ways, beliefs and values, the newcomers could scarcely avoid the error of thinking that the Aborigines were so primitive that intrusion could mean little to them. For the Aborigines, on the other hand, usually shy and harmless at first, would come the slow realization of the permanent usurpation of their land, of fundamental interferences with their lives. The inevitable clashes meant defeat for the Aborigines. The swift tide of settlement, however, flowed on before the Aborigines (lacking any firm points around which to build) had time to adjust themselves to this realization. They were capable of such adjustment for they have survived in the marginal areas of European settlement through what Professor A. P. Elkin calls "a state of intelligent parasitism Adaption, which was formerly to nature . . . is now to the settler . . . based on the necessity for adaptation, not on a desire for civilization, nor on a respect for the white man".

The mental and spiritual effects of this clash, however, were ultimately the most important. As tribes found that settlement made their old life impossible in their own territory, social and religious organization broke down, belief in the future and the will to survive were weakened. The younger tribesmen became more amenable to and dependent upon the white men and contemptuous of the old men's knowledge and authority before they learned that they did not really share the new settlers' views and ways of life. Thus many of them, not entrusted with the sacred knowledge and, finally disillusioned, found themselves then with no spiritual retreat.

Nevertheless, a definite increase in the numbers of the Aborigines is becoming a mark of the present. This is the first and most tangible result of the development of the knowledge of the Aborigines,

the application of enlightened policies, scientific approaches, and increasing goodwill on the part of other Australians.

The problem, however, remains a most complicated one—in part through the extreme diversity of the ways of life of the Aboriginal people. Today they are living at all stages of change, from a wholly primitive life to a modern one. There are probably none who have not seen white men, but in the remote deserts there remain a few who seldom see them, and who still wander naked over their tribal grounds. In other remote regions and on reserves there are still some thousands who, although they are more closely in touch with Europeans, are still more subject to tribal than to European influences. The great body of people described as Aborigines, however, are living almost constantly in touch with settled communities. Even if it were desirable to leave them alone in untouched seclusion, and even if this modern age would permit this, they refuse to be so left. A recent scientific survey in Western Australia concluded that “there appears to be some irresistible attraction towards centres of white man’s culture leading more and more natives from being aristocrats in the seclusion of their own hunting grounds to the outskirts of the towns”. Perhaps the present position in the Northern Territory may be taken as typical. There, about 6,000 Aborigines are in touch with the Missions; possibly 5,000 are centred around Government settlements; about 6,000 work or are based on pastoral properties and on the fringes of towns; and approximately 300 are nomadic. The problems of administration and assimilation posed by these people are as diverse as their ways of living.

What are the Attitudes of Governments?

From the time of Governor Phillip’s landing in Australia the attitudes of the various Governments concerned have been of benevolence towards and concern for the Aborigines. After the swift spread of settlement defeated the earliest policies, a policy of definite “protection” developed. This, though animated by great humanity, was based on the pessimism bred by early disappointment from efforts to control them and ignorance of the Aborigines and their ways. At one time it was thought that they were “bound to die out” and the best that could be done was to keep their passing free from pain. Even some people honoured for their humanitarian work amongst the Aborigines saw their task half a century ago as only to “smooth the dying pillow”.

Nevertheless this period saw the development of many reserves to protect the Aboriginal people from the uncushioned shocks of contact with an alien civilization and some few but very positive provisions for “promoting the welfare of the Aborigines”. As the present century advanced these more positive attitudes were strengthened by increasing knowledge of the Aborigines; by the changes in social thinking expressed first in Victorian England, applied by English colonial reformers and fostered by a growing body of

Australian campaigners in the nineteen-twenties. Their campaign found a public landmark in the Canberra Conference of 1937. Though the outbreak of war in 1939 temporarily checked the new approach, from 1945 onwards the Commonwealth (directly responsible only for the Northern Territory Aborigines) and State Governments (each directly responsible for the Aborigines within its own borders) alike have attacked the Aboriginal problem constructively and vigorously, their expenditure on Aboriginal welfare and development mounting rapidly.

This policy was first pronounced in 1951 and reaffirmed in 1961 at conferences of Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for Aboriginal welfare. The conferences agreed that the policy of assimilation means in the view of all Australian governments that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australian and to live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Thus, any special measures taken for Aborigines and part-Aborigines are regarded as temporary measures not based on colour but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance; to protect them from any ill effects of sudden change and to assist them to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favorable to their future social, economic and political advancement. The Governments see the problems primarily as problems of advancement and adjustment of a minority of approximately 100,000 people in a total population of 11,000,000.

These conferences demonstrated the strong and growing interest of the Australian Government in Aboriginal welfare and the fact that a considerable effort is being made.

Although the Governments can do a great deal towards helping the Aboriginal people towards assimilation, ultimately the success of assimilation will depend on acceptance of Aborigines by the whole Australian community, and assistance to them in this difficult period of transition. At the present stage the most direct challenge comes not to governments but to the whole of the Australian community.

What have the Missions Done in the Past?

The first missionary to work among the Aborigines was probably the Rev. Samuel Marsden who established a mission near Sydney in 1795. In every Australian colony settlement was followed closely by missionary efforts. Many of them were devoted to the simple aim of converting the heathen, but some came to a gradual realization that religious teaching might also be supplemented to embrace a new for a people who not only were being asked to embrace a new religion but to change the whole of their daily existence. Daily missionary efforts were often attended by disappointment and called

for great Christian fortitude, patience and faith. Only a few examples can be given to illustrate the missionary story.

At New Norcia in Western Australia, about 80 miles north of Perth there stands today a cathedral, a monastery, schools, and orphanages developed from a mission started in 1846. In that year two Spanish Benedictines went out beyond the edge of existing settlement and, in face of great difficulties and hardship, established their mission. The hazards of bushfire, flood and crop failures were endured. In due course the New Norcia mission became so strong that it was able to send its own missionaries to Drysdale River in the Kimberleys in 1908 to repeat the pioneering effort in a new region.

As early as 1875 a courageous band of sixteen Lutherans set out for Central Australia from Bethany in South Australia. Only thirteen years had passed since the first crossing of the continent from south to north. The missionaries took 3,100 sheep, 17 head of cattle and 33 horses towards the centre of a rapidly worsening drought. After eighteen months' struggling through heat and dust and waterless desert and bleak winter winds, suffering from blight and scurvy, at last they came to that part of the dry bed of the Finke River which was their goal. They named the place Hermannsburg and established their mission there. The mission very nearly failed. It was 700 miles from the nearest railhead. Up to ten months were required to cover the parched road back to civilization—by horse-drawn waggon. But now the Hermannsburg mission is a spiritual centre for the Aranda people and a focus for their material development.

Almost 1,000 miles further north Anglicans led a movement among the fierce Aborigines of the Caledon Bay area. In 1932 these

Part-Aboriginal children at the Retta Dixon Home, Darwin, live as families in separate houses and are cared for by foster parents



Aborigines killed five Japanese and two Australians. The following year they killed a policeman. The Northern Territory Administration then proposed sending a strong police party against them. It yielded, however, to a plea from the Church Missionary Society that two of their missionaries should be allowed to conduct a peace expedition among the disturbed Aborigines. The missionaries established friendly relations with the Caledon Bay people, and prevailed on the actual killers to go to Darwin for trial.

In 1937 the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions brought Ernabella, a sheep station of some 500 square miles. They aimed to work there on the basis that the new religion and the new way of life should be grafted onto the old ways and should then replace them only very, very gradually.

The Methodist Mission at Croker Island has worked among the Aborigines or part-Aborigines in Arnhem Land since 1916. The missionaries set out to educate the people to an Australian standard of life and to train them for pastoral, agricultural and other pursuits. Following the bombing of Darwin in February, 1942, the settlement was moved to Otford, near Sydney. After the war, however, it returned to Croker Island where the missionaries have carried on their work with marked success.

In 1956 a new mission to the Aborigines was established in the Northern Territory—on the Daly River—by the Roman Catholic Church. Missionaries there, with generous Government assistance, have already raised a thriving settlement out in the lonely bush.

These missionary efforts and achievements are mentioned merely as typical of the work which has been attempted by the Christian missions for the Aborigines and which has been persisted with in spite of many years of disappointment and sometimes utter failure.

What are the Governments and Missions Doing Now?

In 1948, as a consequence of a move initiated at the Premier's Conference in 1947 by the Minister for Native Affairs in Western Australia, Mr. Ross MacDonald, Federal and State officials met at Canberra to determine how best a common approach to the Aboriginal problem might be developed. These discussions were followed by a conference in 1951 of the Federal and State Ministers concerned with native welfare—most significant because it was the first meeting of Ministers and because the scope of its discussions and conclusions was wider and more definite than at the earlier meetings.

This conference resulted in the formation of the Native Welfare Council (consisting of the various Commonwealth and State Ministers concerned) designed to promote closer co-operation throughout Australia for the advancement of native welfare; in a series of

statements on what were conceived to be the key points of a positive approach; and in agreement that the Governments concerned should work towards the ends involved by common means as far as possible. The statements related to Citizenship Status (re-affirming the assimilation goal); Social Service Benefits (directing attention to the need for removing existing anomalies); Health; Education (stressing that education of Aborigines must be for full citizenship as part of the Australian community, must embrace the spiritual as well as the cultural); Employment (asserting that full citizenship for Aborigines should include the right to receive the same conditions as all Australians for work of similar class, and the right to full membership of appropriate trade unions or professional associations—while noting that this condition applied generally); the Government and mission stations (affirming that the continuation of these stations was essential); Franchise (requesting State Governments to review their electoral laws in respect of Aborigines and noting that enrolment for Federal elections followed directly from enrolment for State elections).

In 1961 another conference of Ministers concerned in native welfare was convened in Canberra and the conference agreed that machinery for continuous co-operation in advancing the policy of assimilation be established by providing regular conferences on Aboriginal welfare. The conference also agreed that methods of advancing the policy of assimilation were—

- (i) Extension, where applicable, of government settlement work to encourage nomadic and semi-nomadic natives to adopt a more settled way of life and to make health services, better standards of housing and nutrition, schooling, vocational training and occupation available to them and their children, as a first stage towards their assimilation.
- (ii) Provision of health services including particularly child welfare services.
- (iii) Provision of education in normal schools and pre-schools to the extent possible, otherwise in special schools and pre-schools for all Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children.
- (iv) Continual improvement in housing and hygiene standards on government settlements, missions, rural properties, in towns and assistance towards provision of and training in the use of improved housing facilities particularly in town areas.
- (v) Vocational training (including apprenticeship) and employment, particularly in ways which will assist Aborigines and part-Aborigines to make a contribution to the advancement of their own people—teaching assistants,

nursing and medical assistants, patrol officers, welfare officers, etc.

- (vi) Encouragement of social and sporting activity both among Aborigines and part-Aborigines and participation by them in general community activity.
- (vii) Extension of welfare work, particularly to assist those people living in or near towns to adjust themselves to the life of the community.
- (viii) Welfare services provided for other members of the community to be available to Aborigines and part-Aborigines (child, family and social welfare services).
- (ix) A liberal approach to the removal of restrictive or protective legislation as soon as the capacity and advancement of the individual makes this possible.
- (x) Positive steps to ensure awareness in the community that implementation of the policy of assimilation is not possible unless advanced Aborigines and part-Aborigines are received into the community and accepted without prejudice, and to ensure, as far as possible, that the community plays its full part.
- (xi) Further research into special problems associated with the native welfare programme.

It is recognized that some of these methods may not be applicable in every State of the Commonwealth and that methods may vary from State to State.

Story time in the infants' class at Yuendumu Government Settlement, Northern Territory





Gordon Gulambara, head stockman, returning home after mustering cattle at Beswick Government Settlement, Northern Territory

The Northern Territory

In the revitalized post-war atmosphere the Commonwealth recognized the necessity to give a lead to the States and put its own house in order. It had become responsible for the Northern Territory in 1910. It had adopted a policy of "protection" and expressed this in the Aborigines Ordinance of 1918 (with subsequent amendments). The year 1939, however, had seen the vigorous beginnings of a new approach though the 1939-45 war not only temporarily stifled the new movement but also left problems behind it, as the Northern Territory had been an operational area.

The Northern Territory is almost six times larger than Great Britain. Its nature varies from the lush tropical north to the baked centre. Scattered through it are more than 18,200 Aborigines varying in customs, skills and ways of life between the extremes represented by the salt water people of the north coast and the desert tribes of the centre. Except in pastoral pursuits only a minority have developed skills which they can use to advantage within the

Australian economy; difficulties are experienced in developing an appreciation of social requirements and observations or awareness of health necessities; not many speak English fluently.

In 1953 the Northern Territory Legislative Council passed the Welfare Ordinance and the Ward's Employment Ordinance (both of which are now in operation, and have replaced the Aboriginals Ordinance). The Welfare Ordinance provided for the creation of a Welfare Branch under a Director specifically charged with the task of positively promoting the welfare of Aborigines (towards their ultimate assimilation). It is based on the concept that Australian citizenship is as much the birthright of Aborigines as it is of other Australians; it rejects the method of "exempting" individuals from special legislation applicable to them as a race through any definition of the word "Aboriginal"; it provides that individuals only may be deemed to be in need of special protection. This provision takes no cognizance of race and is applicable to all individuals in the Territory. The reasons for the invoking of this Ordinance in respect of any person may not be colour or a fraction of colour.

To those who come within its scope it brings positive privileges beyond the necessarily restrictive protection of its clauses. The Ward's Employment Ordinance is complementary. It provides a comprehensive employment code for wards and includes special measures designed to advance the training of wards. Recreation leave, sick leave, hours of work and workers' compensation are prescribed. The Ordinance also provides for the granting of financial assistance to wards to enable them to engage in or carry on a trade, business or other undertaking. An Employment Advisory Board, of which an Aboriginal is a member, advises the Administration on matters relating to the training and employment of wards.

By amendment of the Aboriginals Ordinance in 1953 part-Aborigines became subject only to the ordinary law. The Government has made further provision for them through the establishment of special housing schemes to allow them cheap rents for European-type houses and to build houses on their own account. It also provides up to £300 a year in respect of selected part-Aboriginal children removed from the Northern Territory in the care of Missions and trained for economic and social absorption in the southern States.

The pattern of development in the Northern Territory is based, during the present stage, on a system of reserves and Government and mission settlements. Seventeen areas totalling 59,936,320 acres have been set aside as reserves for the benefit and use of Aboriginal people. For the most part on reserves, thirteen Government settlements and two Pastoral Projects (run by the Government) are operating to provide focal points at which Aborigines may receive medical care, education and training in trades.

The Government is giving increasing attention to the participation of Aborigines in economic activities in the Territory. A forestry programme is being undertaken to develop the forestry resources in the reserves for wards. The programme will provide opportunities for training and gainful employment for the local Aborigines. In addition provision has been made for all royalties on timber cut in the reserves to be placed in the Trust Fund which is applied for the benefit of Aborigines in the Territory.

The Government has also approved the establishment at the Maningrida Welfare Settlement of a pilot small-scale fishing project. Lack of staff, suitable boats, and refrigeration and depot facilities has hampered, in the past, the development of fishing at mission stations and welfare settlements in the Northern Territory. The proposed depot to be established at Maningrida will have full facilities including a pontoon wharf and freezing, processing and storage facilities. Three powered fishing boats are being constructed for delivery to Maningrida.

An extension officer will be stationed at the depot to train the native people in the latest fishing techniques and to give special training in such matters as gear repair and preservation, engine maintenance and in hygienic handling of fish. Proposals for the extension of the scheme to other welfare settlements and mission stations are to be developed in the light of the experience at Maningrida.

Among the Aborigines, missionaries of the Church of England are at work on five stations, directly influencing about 1,300 Aborigines; the Lutheran Mission at Hermannsburg is in close touch with some 500 Aranda people; the Methodist Overseas Mission operates four stations in continuous contact with about 1,600 Aborigines along the north coast of Arnhem Land; Roman Catholic missions are responsible for four stations (from the north coast to the centre) and for about 1,800 people, and mobile missionaries are also at work among the scattered people of Central Australia. Among the part-Aboriginal people the Church of England, the Aborigines Inland Mission, the Methodist Overseas Mission and the Roman Catholic Church maintain institutions, which provide care and guidance for about 500 people. The missions and the Government work together particularly in relation to education, health and the promotion of economic enterprises for the training of, and the ultimate achievements of economic independence by, the Aborigines. Government subsidies to missions have increased annually since the war and totalled £490,144 in 1962-63.

In the field of education there has been marked activity. Seventeen special Administration schools have been established with an enrolment of about 1,050 children; six subsidized schools are operating on pastoral properties with 190 children attending; sixteen mission schools are being subsidized by the Government to cater for about 1,500 children. Emphasis is being given to the education of

women. There are also three pre-schools on settlements, where young Aboriginal children may commence to learn through play the process of adaptation which will be continued in the schools.

In recognition of the importance of education in the assimilation policy, a three-year programme was introduced in 1961 to bring education to 90 per cent. of Aboriginal children of school age by 1964.

Modern hospital facilities are provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health at Darwin, Batchelor, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Medical aid posts in the charge of qualified nursing sisters are located on all Administration and mission settlements and are being developed on the big pastoral properties. Some of the larger mission stations conduct small but efficient hospitals giving a wide range of treatment. Training courses are conducted by the Administration at Darwin and Alice Springs for hygiene assistants. After completing the course, the trainees return to their settlements or missions to work and, as a result, there has been a marked improvement in hygiene conditions. The Aerial Medical Service of the Commonwealth Department of Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service are available to all Territory residents. Special measures to combat the most troublesome diseases are being provided. A new leprosarium costing £400,000 has been opened on the mainland to replace the old one on Channel Island. Particular attention is being paid to nutrition.

During 1962-63 direct expenditure by the Welfare Branch has been £1,253,484 (excluding Education and substantial Health expenditure integrated into the general Health vote); Social Service Benefits to Aborigines in the Northern Territory and South Australia have approximated £500,000; expenditure by missions (exclusive of Government subsidies), unassessable by generally accepted standards, has run into many thousands of pounds. Full-time staff employed by the Welfare Branch totals 267; full-time mission staff totals about 123.

Queensland

Legislation covering the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Queensland is now incorporated in the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Acts 1939 to 1946 which provide for the appointment of a Director of Native Affairs with an administrative staff to assist him and machinery for developing positive welfare measures. It is now considered that many of the provisions in the present Act are now no longer necessary and a Committee has been appointed to make recommendations to the Minister for the Act to be amended to serve the best interests of Queensland's Aborigines.

Like the Northern Territory (though more favourably placed by virtue of its greater population and development) Queensland faces a problem posed by the existence of a relatively small Aboriginal population scattered through a vast area ranging from the tropical country of the extreme north, through semi-desert conditions in parts

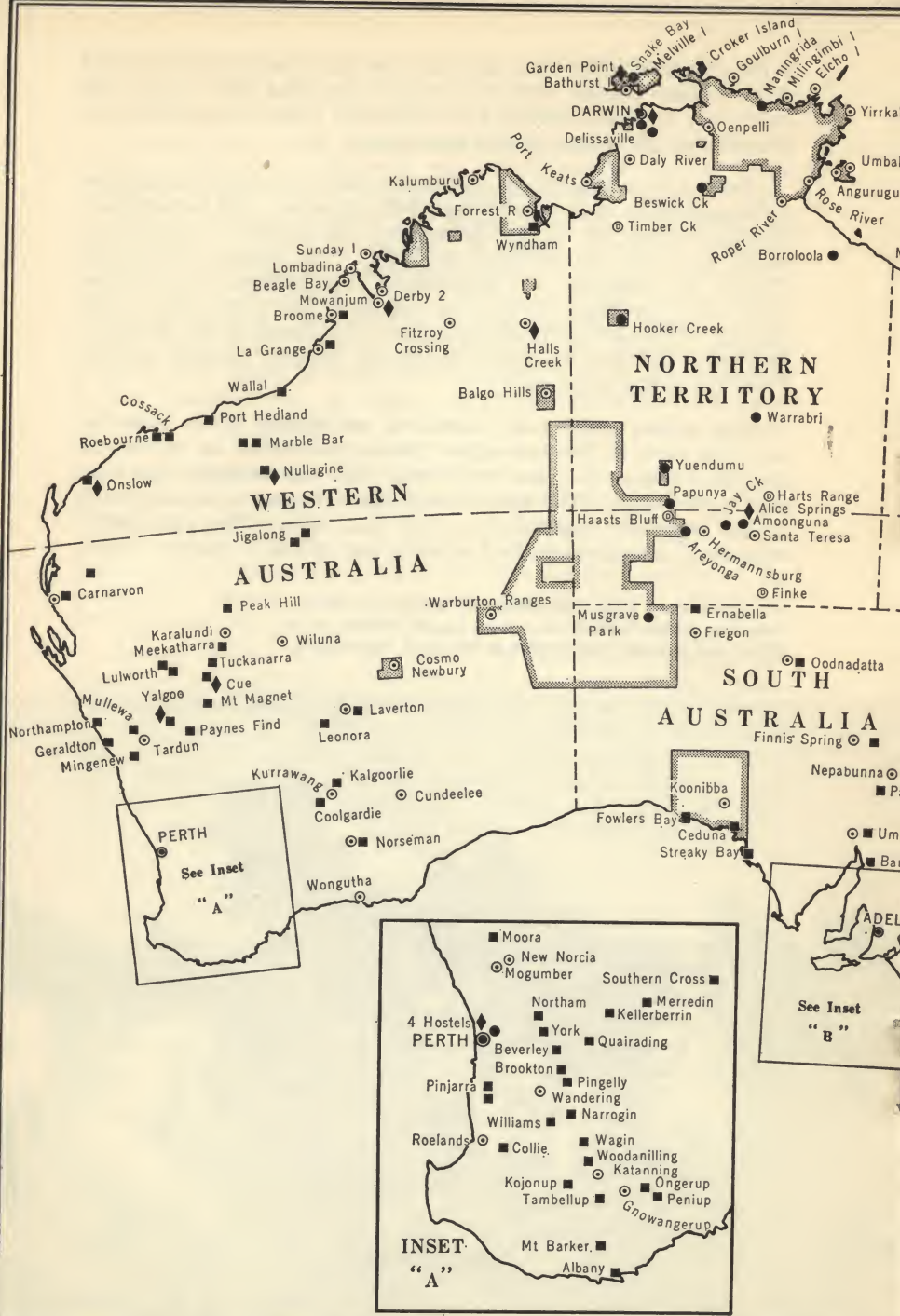
to the temperate south. But there are now more people in Queensland of Aboriginal descent who have been assimilated into the general community than are controlled and protected under the relevant acts. The problem of these people has been solved.

There are 6 Government settlements and 11 mission settlements in Queensland on reserves totalling 6,440,427 acres. The Government settlements cater for 1,664 Aborigines and 2,830 part-Aboriginal people and 559 Torres Strait Islanders. The mission settlements (Church of England—3; Presbyterian—4; Lutheran—1; Roman Catholic—1; Brethren—1) provide assistance and training for 3,198 Aborigines and 409 part-Aborigines and 147 Torres Strait Islanders. Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people on country reserves number 5,500 and 4,568 respectively.

Most of the missions in Queensland are situated in the more inaccessible parts of the State where climatic conditions are harsh and adequate transport facilities are lacking. But the missions have long been active there. The first Presbyterian missions were established on the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1895 and 1898. They are active evangelists, educators, medical workers and industrial leaders. They

Aborigines show a marked proficiency at sport, and the Australian Rules football team from Bagot, Darwin, is a skilfull and popular combination in the town competition





NORTHERN TERRITORY

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PERTH
See Inset
"A"

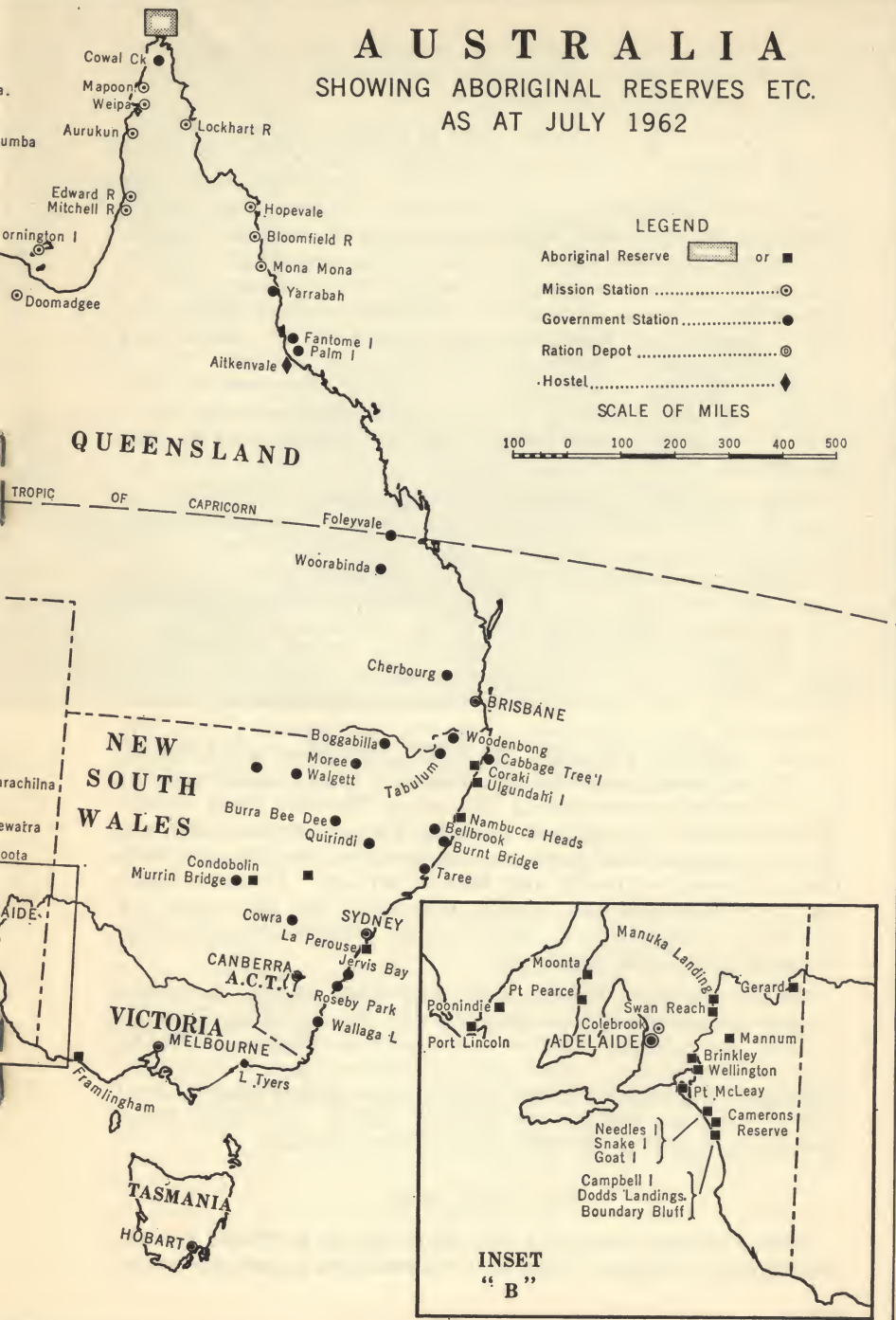
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"B"

INSET "A"

- Moora
- New Norcia
- Mogumber
- Southern Cross
- Northam
- Merredin
- York
- Kellerberrin
- Beverley
- Quairading
- Brookton
- Pinjarra
- Pingelly
- Wandering
- Williams
- Narrogin
- Roelands
- Collie
- Wagin
- Woodanilling
- Katanning
- Kojonup
- Ongerup
- Tambellup
- Peniup
- Gnowangerup
- Mt Barker
- Albany

A U S T R A L I A

SHOWING ABORIGINAL RESERVES ETC.
AS AT JULY 1962



have promoted marine industries, crocodile shooting, agriculture, cattle raising, building, timber-getting and sawmilling. The Anglican missions have been similarly active.

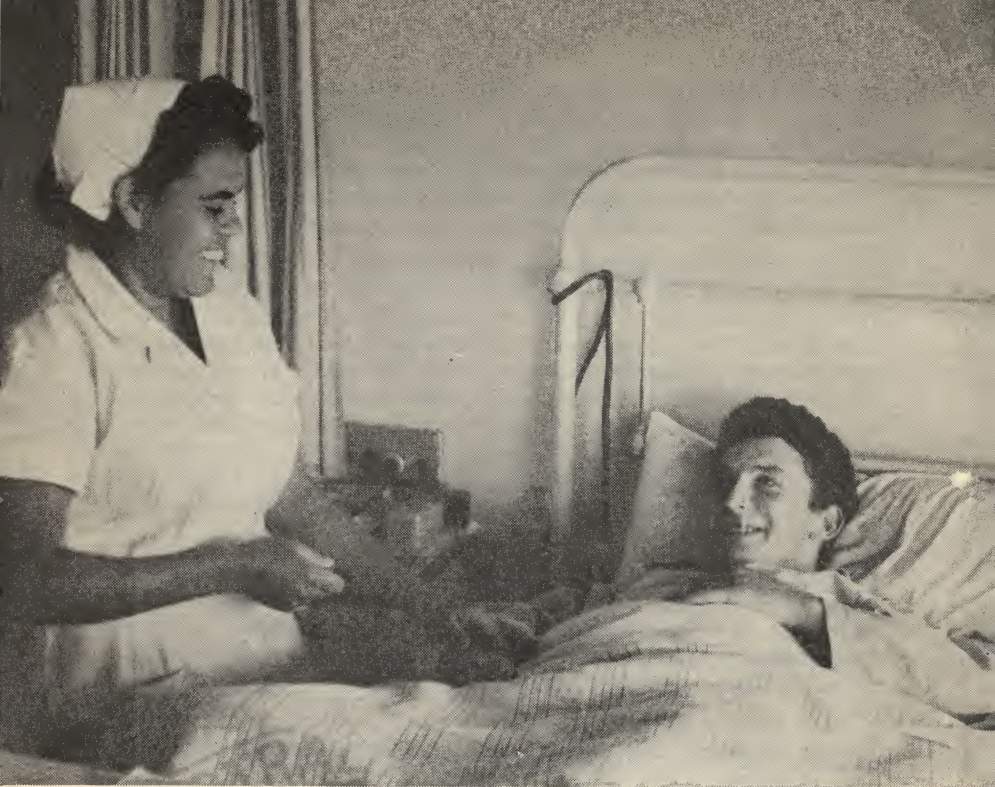
The Queensland Government aims to provide a primary education for all Aboriginal children and encourage them to enter secondary schools. Practically every Aboriginal child attends a primary school. Some 2,100 Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children attend schools controlled by the Native Affairs Department or missions: children from Government settlements or missions who have passed the State Scholarship or who have progressed satisfactorily have been given the opportunity to attend high school. (Nineteen of these children are now in attendance.) State and church schools not on reserves have 2,500 pupils and an additional 5,000 Aboriginal children (but not subject to the relevant acts) also attend schools throughout the State. Twenty-eight Aboriginal children are now obtaining secondary education at High Schools throughout the State at the expense of the State Government.

The Queensland Government had paid particular attention to housing. Houses for Aborigines had been built on Government settlements, largely by the Aborigines themselves and from materials produced and prepared on the settlements by them; houses of various types have been built by the same means on mission settlements. The erection of houses is still continuing in settlements and missions and the Department of Native Affairs has in the last few years also given attention to housing on country reserves. Accommodation has been built for Aboriginal families at Normanton, Mareeba, Croydon, Georgetown, Coen, Mossman, Cloncurry, Camooweal, Cairns, Mt. Garnet, Birdsville, Cooktown, Herberton, Ravenshoe and Kingaroy. In addition hostels have been constructed at Cairns (accommodating 20), Townsville (accommodating 100) and on Thursday Island (accommodating 200). This emphasis on housing has improved health conditions among the Aborigines—an improvement fostered by the State Director-General of Health and Medical Services. Extensive provision on Government and Mission settlements has been made for maternal and child welfare; drives against tuberculosis; and special measures to deal with hookworm.

During the year 1962-63 direct expenditure by the Queensland Government on Aboriginal welfare was £827,401 (including £174,206 in direct and incidental subsidies to missions); an additional £240,187, "protection of Aborigines" (inter alia) "to exercise a general supervision settlements, was returned to the settlements for greater developmental work. There are 190 on the full-time staff of the Native Affairs Department and 81 on the full-time staffs of the missions.

New South Wales

The Aborigines Protection Act 1909 set up a "Board for the protection of Aborigines" (inter alia) "to exercise a general supervision



Aboriginal girls are trained in nursing and other fields of interest to them. Miss Pearl Ashwin, the Daisy Bates Memorial Prize winner in 1959, is a nursing aide at Meekatharra Hospital, Western Australia

and care over all matters affecting the interest and welfare of Aborigines, and to protect them against injustices, imposition, and fraud”.

In 1940 this legislation was amended to provide for a re-constituted Aborigines Welfare Board with an additional purpose “of assisting Aborigines in obtaining employment and of maintaining or assisting to maintain them whilst so employed or otherwise for the purpose of assisting Aborigines to become assimilated into the general life of the community”.

In New South Wales the Aboriginal problem now relates mainly to part-Aborigines. These are descended from the Aborigines who felt the first—and perhaps the most detrimental—impact of European settlement. They now live in scattered groups throughout the State on the fertile and closely settled coastal country and the wide, dry plains of the north-west and the west. Increasing numbers of them are becoming assimilated into the general community and have their own homes. Some, however, live on the reserves, while others

live in sub-standard conditions on the outskirts of towns and, mainly because of their living conditions, are not generally socially acceptable to the rest of the community. The Board's eight male and five female Welfare Officers work principally among these people. Particular attention is paid by Welfare Officers to Aborigines living beyond the confines of stations and reserves.

Some of the more important responsibilities of a Welfare Officer are of fostering good relationships between the Aborigines and the rest of the community and of encouraging and assisting the promotion of voluntary organizations for Aboriginal welfare. Officers are expected also to identify themselves with the public life of the area in which they work, to locate suitable sites as individual building lots or for reserves and to secure employment for Aborigines and, subsequently, to watch over their interests in employment. An additional important duty is the safeguarding of the well-being of children and, in appropriate cases, to have neglected children committed to the care of the Board.

Female Welfare Officers are concerned primarily with the interests of women, children and teenage girls. They are required to make periodical visits to all stations, reserves and settlements to assist, where necessary, in formulating a positive programme of instruction in health, hygiene, mothercraft, and infant welfare.

The Board's policy in assimilating the Aboriginal people is based on the education, child welfare, housing, health and employment of the Aborigines. The alternative to assimilation is the negative prospect of groups clinging together on reserves in houses provided by the Government and requiring the expenditure of increasing sums on maintenance and replacement. Although ultimate assimilation may be slow, it offers the Aborigines the prospect of full acceptance by the community.

All schools in New South Wales attended by Aboriginal children are now fully staffed by teachers of the Department of Education. Aboriginal station schools are attended by 854 children and 1220 living on reserves attend ordinary primary schools. In State high schools there are 261 children (14 who have annual bursaries to the value of £50 which are awarded by the Board). There are many children from fully assimilated families attending school. No records are held of these children. Aboriginal school children receive transport subsidies, free milk and other amenities available to all school children. Pre-school centres run by the Save the Children Fund operate at Coff's Harbour and Armidale. These are assisted by the Board.

Aboriginal children can be placed in the Board's care as wards. In June, 1963, there were 295 wards, 164 of them in foster homes. The Board considers that foster homes are far preferable to institutions and that their use is a positive step towards assimilation.

Since 1946, 426 modern cottages have been erected on stations and reserves. Forty-seven cottages have been built in municipal areas and let on a rent/purchase basis which allows the Aboriginal tenants to buy the homes on easy terms after two years satisfactory tenancy. Aborigines have been settled in Housing Commission homes in many centres including four in Sydney. Loans have been made available at low interest rates to Aborigines to build or purchase homes. Since 1954, £94,500 has been advanced to 66 Aborigines. The majority of Aborigines assisted in this way accept their obligations.

Housing is a difficult problem. A survey in 1963 showed that to repair and add to those houses occupied by Aborigines and part-Aborigines suitable for repair and additions would cost over £1,347,000.

The Aborigines Welfare Board controls 47 reserves. Fifteen are classed as stations under the supervision of full-time managers and matrons. These are housing settlements where Aborigines are trained to take their places in the general community. There are 36 reserves. One has a full-time supervisor and eight have part-time supervisors, most of whom are teachers of the reserve schools.

The total direct expenditure by the Board in 1962-63 was about £245,000, and a further £125,000 was spent in the year on new homes for Aborigines.

Victoria

In 1957, the Aborigines' Act set up the Aborigines' Welfare Board. Its statutory function was to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of Aborigines, including any person of Aboriginal descent.

There are about 3,000 part-Aborigines in Victoria, 150 live on reserves. There are 500 in Melbourne, the rest are in country districts. Welfare staff pay particular attention to health, housing, education, employment and general welfare, and work in close co-operation with the Department of Health, hospitals and municipal authorities to ensure that the health of the Aborigines is improved.

The Board employs a triple certificated nursing sister who supervises health problems among Aborigines and teaches mothers in home hygiene and child care. Drugs and supplementary foods for Aboriginal children are also supplied by the Board through Infant Welfare Sisters and the Save the Children Welfare Fund Centres.

Seventy houses for Aboriginal families have been provided by the Board in the last five years, the majority being new homes, specially designed and constructed. The first 22 units at Mooroopna and Robinvale were transit units to meet special needs where deplorable riverbank shanty towns existed. Since then, all have been of conventional design. They have been located in ordinary town allotments, with three bedrooms and an average cost of £3,250—plus land cost.

Forty other families have become tenants of housing Commission homes through the usual channels. The Government has commenced to expand this programme and will provide 230 homes for over a period of three years. This will be a joint effort of the Board and the Housing Commission. Low rents are charged for houses owned by the Board and a scheme of rental subsidies has been approved.

In co-operation with the Education Department, Board Officers are ensuring that, as far as possible, children of school age are enrolled and attend school regularly. Attendance records have shown a marked improvement as a result. The numbers of children attending High Schools and Technical School has rapidly increased, and 81 were enrolled in 1963, half being new enrolments. Most receive some financial assistance from Government or voluntary sources, the actual amount varying according to need. Aboriginal children participate in special holiday schemes.

There is a Welfare staff of six and seven other Government Officers are employed full-time on Aboriginal welfare work. Welfare Officers are in regular contact with most Aboriginal families throughout the State, advising and assisting when requested in such matters as employment and housing problems, financial, health and personal problems and arranging legal aid where necessary. The constant aim of the Board is to encourage Aborigines to become self-reliant and able to take their place in the Australian community.

There are 4,548 acres set aside as Aboriginal reserves at Lake Tyers and Framlingham. Lake Tyers, including resident staff, has a population of 83 and Framlingham, with no resident staff, has 70. Those families who desire to leave these settlements will be re-housed in towns of their own nomination.

In 1962-63 government expenditure on Aboriginal welfare was £75,000 in addition to Commonwealth Social Service payments.

South Australia

On the 28th February, 1963, the Aboriginal Affairs Act came into operation. This new Act, involving a complete overhaul of existing legislation, provides the machinery for the abolition of all restrictions and restraints on Aborigines as citizens, and for the gradual relaxation of the law relating to their use of alcohol. In addition the Act gives a mandate to those responsible for the administration of Aboriginal Affairs to promote the social, economic and political development of Aborigines and persons of Aboriginal blood until their integration into the general community.

Under the new Act the Board of Aboriginal Affairs becomes an advisory body, whereas the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, through the Director and the Officers of this Department, will be responsible to Parliament for the administration of the Act. The term

"Aboriginal" is used to refer only to the full-blood descendant of the original inhabitants of this country and the term "person of Aboriginal blood" to those who are less than full-blood or are part-Aboriginal.

Provision has been made in the Act for certain localities in the State to be proclaimed as areas in which Aborigines and persons of Aboriginal blood may have unrestricted access to alcohol, in the same manner as any other member of the community. On the 25th July, 1963, the first of such areas was proclaimed.

Recognizing that the social changes embodied in the new law, could create misunderstanding if introduced suddenly, the Department initiated an educational programme designed to inform all sections of the community of the purpose of the law. Many groups including professional and Church organizations have been contacted in this educational programme and a printed brochure widely circulated.

The area of Aboriginal reserve totals 18,833,410 acres. Six major reserves are under the control of the Department and are situated at Point McLeay, Point Pearce, Gerard, Koonibba, Coober Pedy and at Musgrave Park in the North-West of the State. A seventh major reserve, Yalata, is situated on western Eyre Peninsula and is operated by the Lutheran Church under agreement with the Department. An Aboriginal Women's Home at North Adelaide is also under the control of the Department. In addition district Welfare Officers are located at four country centres, Ceduna, Port Augusta, Berri and Andamooka, whilst the remainder of the State is regularly visited by Officers who are based in the city. Welfare Officers are stationed on major Government reserves, part of their duties being to prepare residents to take the first step on the road towards assimilation.

Church organizations are also operating Missions and Children's Homes. The Presbyterian Church of Australia—one mission station; The United Aborigines Mission—one mission station, two children's homes and a girls' hostel; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia—one mission station; Brethren—one children's home; Aborigines Advancement League—one girls' hostel.

Towards the goal of ultimate assimilation the Department, through its welfare and reserves staffs is vigorously promoting all aspects of welfare amongst Aborigines.

Close attention is being given to more adequate housing for Aboriginal families, both on and off reserves. For those who are still rather primitive, a portable "wurlie-type" structure has been developed, and for those who are fairly well integrated in the general community, modern brick homes are being provided. To date 105 homes have been built by the Department in country towns, whilst 30 families are in houses provided by the South Australian Housing Trust. In addition to housing, the education of Aboriginal children is a major project in the Department's programme. Seven special

schools for the exclusive instruction of Aboriginal children are still maintained throughout the State. The South Australian Director of Education has undertaken the responsibility for the education of all Aboriginal children, and wherever possible the Department is endeavouring to integrate Aboriginal children into ordinary schools and buses transport the children, especially those in higher grades, from reserves to nearby Education Department schools.

Three pre-primary kindergartens are conducted on Departmental reserves. It is estimated that 800 children are enrolled in Education Department schools throughout the State, and assistance is being given to 55 secondary school children attending technical and high schools in the metropolitan area.

The Department is continuing to maintain in private foster-homes children whose parents are dead, or have been proved unfit; or children needing medical or remedial care; 155 children are with licensed foster mothers and 164 children are in Church institutions.

The medical services for sick Aborigines, both on and off reserves, are continually being expanded. In the past, many of these services were provided free of charge to the Aboriginal. This policy is being changed as the circumstances of individual cases permit, and the Department under the stimulus of the new legislation is not only securing equal opportunity for, but expecting equal responsibility from Aborigines; bringing them closer to the day when they are independent of the benevolent and paternalistic community.

The full-time staff employed on Aboriginal welfare and administration totals 82, while full-time mission staff totals 40.

During the year 1962-63, expenditure was as under:—

	£
Administration	82,896
Operational expenses, including training	322,981
Purchases of land, houses, buildings, plant and equipment	110,805
	516,682

The Department has been provided with an amount of £674,210 on the current year's estimates.

Western Australia

Following earlier benevolent legislation dating back to 1886, the Native Welfare Act 1954 transformed the Western Australian Government instrument into the Department of Native Welfare (under a Commissioner of Native Welfare) "charged with the duty of promoting the welfare of the natives, providing them with food, clothing, medicine and medical assistance, when they would otherwise be destitute, providing for the education of native children and generally

assisting in the preservation and well being of the natives"; and required also "to exercise such supervision and care over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of the natives as the Minister in his discretion considers most fitting to assist in their economic and social assimilation by the community of the States, and to protect them again injustices, imposition and fraud".

Western Australia is almost twice the size of the Northern Territory and faces an even more aggravated form of Aboriginal problem. Much of the State is similar to large parts of the Territory—vast, dry, sparsely populated and in many respects undeveloped. Its Aboriginal population is scattered throughout the State from the well-settled south-western regions and the wastes of the Nullabor Plain to the remote and empty northern areas.

For the purpose of Aboriginal administration, the State is divided into six Divisions and the Divisions further sub-divided into Districts each staffed by District Welfare Officers, Assistant District Welfare Officers, Welfare Inspectors and other officials. Divisions are in the charge of Divisional Superintendents and Districts are under District Officers. Other field staff in these administrative units are Assistant Superintendents, Women Welfare Officers and trainee District Officers, besides clerical staff. There are 21 Field Offices or administrative posts throughout the State.

Aboriginal reserves total 33,820,902 acres. Twenty-nine Christian missions are at work among the Aborigines (Anglican—2; Roman Catholic—8; Presbyterian—1; Methodist—1; Church of Christ—2; Baptist Union—1; Seventh Day Adventist—2; Apostolic Church of Australia—1; Gospel Brotherhood—1; United Aborigines Mission—7; other Interdenominational Missions—3).

The vastness and difficult physical conditions of Western Australia and the fragmentation and varying degrees of advancement represented by the Aboriginal population makes the promotion of the fundamental welfare activities a particularly difficult task. Favourably placed Aboriginal children attend Government and other ordinary schools throughout the State without discrimination; the total of Aboriginal children in schools of all kinds is now 4,147 of whom 3,814 are at primary schools and 333 at secondary schools. In addition, there are five mission-controlled hostels and six departmental hostels throughout the State to cater for school children and teenage workers whose parents reside on pastoral properties or in country areas beyond the reach of school services.

The Western Australian Government is attacking the difficult housing problem vigorously. There are 75 occupied houses controlled by the State Housing Commission under the original scheme of 1945, which is supplemented by the departmental intermediate housing scheme under which 90 self-contained houses have been erected; some on town blocks and others on housing reserves. These latter are served by communal facilities. The total number of homes

accommodating Aborigines is thus 439, excluding homes provided on farms, timber mills and at rail centres for permanent Aboriginal workers.

Extensive medical surveys and follow-up treatment have been carried out among the Aborigines. A conclusion from one such survey was that Aboriginal education should include instruction in diet, hygiene, sanitation and instruction in health responsibility. The department's female Welfare staff of 16 now attend to this. Otherwise, in an environment new to him, the Aboriginal would become a prey to disease and a danger to others.

Direct Government expenditure in Western Australia on Aboriginal welfare continues to increase. Expenditure over the past five years has been in 1958-59, £591,020; 1959-60, £636,224; 1960-61, £762,295; 1961-62, £1,300,443; 1962-63, £1,658,873. Of this amount £623,000 was spent on health and £316,000 on education. The Department of Native Welfare staff now consists of 51 field officers and 102 administrative, clerical and institutional staff of whom 41 are Aborigines; full-time mission staff is approximately 350.

Some Problems of Administration

Citizenship

Australian Aborigines are Australian citizens by virtue of the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948-1960. The special rights and disabilities which they have under State and Territory statutes can in no sense derogate from citizenship in the sense of status as Australian citizens. In some respects, the position is somewhat like that of a minor who is basically a citizen but who, because he is under the age of 21 years, may not be able to do everything that other inhabitants of Australia may be able to do, and who may be protected and assisted in ways in which the adult is not protected and assisted. In effect, then, a person placed under the provision of State and Territorial Native Welfare Acts has certain restrictions placed on him in some States but that does not in any way take his Australian citizenship away from him, although it may limit for the time being his exercise of some of the rights enjoyed by other citizens and may afford him assistance not given to other citizens.

The governments of the States under the Commonwealth constitution are severally responsible for those Aborigines living within their State boundaries. This situation creates difficulties in some points in the application of a national policy for Aborigines or those of Aboriginal descent. For example there is a considerable variation among State authorities on the definition of an Aboriginal.

In New South Wales an Aboriginal is defined as "any full blood or half-caste native". For certain purposes a person "apparently having an admixture of aboriginal blood" may be described as an Aboriginal.

In Queensland an Aboriginal is a "person who has a preponderance of aboriginal blood, or a half-blood habitually associating with aborigines". The definition also includes residents of Aboriginal reserves and children living on reserves with an Aboriginal mother.

In Victoria there is no protective or restrictive legislation and accordingly no definition of an "Aboriginal".

South Australian legislation defines an Aboriginal as "full blood, or less than full blood descendant of the original inhabitants of Australia; but descendants of persons who have been exempted . . . (from protective legislation) . . . born after the exemption are not included". For the purposes of liquor prohibition the definition is "Aboriginal native of Australia or half-caste of that race".

Western Australian legislation defines Aborigines as "all full-blood descendants of original inhabitants of Australia, and all other persons descended from those except a quadroon or person of less than quadroon blood".

Persons who come within these definitions of the various States may for a variety of reasons be exempt from the relevant legislation.

It is estimated that there are already approximately 30,000 Aborigines or people of Aboriginal ancestry who do not come under any form of restrictive or protective legislation but live like other Australian citizens. Where special legislation applies to Aborigines only, it is solely because of a clear and temporary need for this in their own interests. Contrary to popular belief, the restrictions are of limited effect.

An integral part of the problem is that some of the barriers are merely social barriers. These citizens will enjoy the privileges of citizenship only if they can live and work as accepted members of the community. The answer to this aspect of the problem lies with all sections of the community, and all individuals within it. Their co-operation is essential for the ultimate assimilation of Aborigines.

Western Australia's Aborigines were given State franchise in 1962.

Franchise

Following a decision in 1961 by the Government to investigate fully the question of the franchise for Aborigines an all-party Select Committee of the House of Representatives was appointed to inquire into the questions of enrolment and voting by Aborigines. The Committee reported that all Aborigines had voting rights except those in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. It recommended that, in respect of these, the Commonwealth Electoral Act be amended to provide that the right to vote at Commonwealth elections be accorded to all Aborigines of voting age. The Committee recommended that, for the time being, enrolment be voluntary but that, after enrolment, voting be compulsory. These recommendations were adopted and legislation enacted with the result that all Aborigines

now have the right to vote in Federal elections. This legislation does not, however, give the right to vote in State elections to Aborigines in Queensland. Aborigines have the right to vote in State elections in all other Australian states.

Social Service Benefits

All Aborigines other than the very few nomads may qualify for all social service benefits in the same way as other members of the Australian community. These benefits are age, invalid and widow's pensions, unemployment and sickness benefits, maternity allowances and child endowment.

Health

The health problems of the Aborigines in southern Australia are those of the general population, but are aggravated by the social and economic conditions peculiar to many Aborigines. Improvements in the general health of Aborigines there depends upon social betterment rather than upon special health measures. In the northern areas there are specific problems. The control of communicable disease, for example, is particularly difficult; there is need for continued entomological surveys; health and welfare programmes should be carried through all stages to the ultimate placement of individuals in settled employment within the community. Diet presents major problems.

Perhaps the major factor preventing social acceptance of many Aborigines by other Australians is their lack of knowledge of fundamental health rules; their personal practices and methods of living can be so deficient by all normal standards of hygiene that their physical presence may be repugnant just as the physical presence of other Australians would be repugnant to their fellows under similar circumstances. But health education is an extraordinarily difficult problem among nomadic peoples in arid areas living as many of the Aborigines do in the type of country which they inhabit. Perhaps little can be done with most of the adults. They, however, create and control the background from which the child emerges and, unless a child can be removed from this background permanently, or at least for substantial periods, his education in health, as in other respects, presents an almost insuperable problem.

This problem is not merely one for government and missions. It is one for individuals in the Australian population at large to concern themselves with, and it represents a field for personal service and effort.

Housing

The Aboriginal, in his natural state, is a houseless nomad. The experience of many missionaries and Government workers has shown that the first step in getting the average Aboriginal housed is to overcome his initial reluctance to live in a house; that, when houses have

been provided for them Aborigines have, at first, often so befouled them that they have quickly made them untenable; that many will, quite casually, tear off doors and literally tear down the houses themselves to burn if they are short of firewood; that, until they are well advanced, they will generally abandon a house completely if a death has occurred in it. The economic aspect is also fundamental. A modern house is costly. A house has only a limited value until it is furnished. Adequate furniture can usually only be secured through economic efforts within the Australian pattern. Many Aborigines are not yet at the stage where they are capable of such economic efforts.

The approach to housing, therefore, as with the approach to the other fundamental social problems relating to Aborigines, must be gradual. Neither socially nor economically can an aboriginal leap from his primitive wurlie into a modern house—nor does he wish to do so. He must be assisted to follow a slow evolutionary path, and if, in following this slow path, the various stages of his housing are far below what is considered normal in an Australian community, this is not a measure of neglect of his welfare nor lack of effort on his behalf.

The problem is a different one, however, with the more advanced or completely detribalized Aborigines in the closely settled areas. Special housing schemes are necessary there, and vigorous help from all other Australians, to enable the Aborigines to emerge from their shanties to non-segregated homes and positions of social, economic and healthy independence.

Education

The long-term object of Aboriginal education must be education for living as part of the Australian community. It must embrace the spiritual and the cultural, provide training in health and hygiene, and include preparation for work and other useful endeavour. Various programmes must be designed to fit the various types of individuals according to their present and potential standards and cultural environments. As far as practicable, Aboriginal children should receive their education in the same institutions as are provided for other children. Prejudices and social conditions which operate against this policy should be actively combatted.

Very often (as in the Northern Territory), isolation or backwardness in social and cultural development makes special schools for Aboriginal children necessary. These schools are regarded as a temporary expedient and, generally, are not considered to be necessary beyond the primary stages—at the end of which children should proceed to the normal secondary schools. The special schools should conform to standards of education and accommodation laid down by the Government's education authority, with whatever adaptations that may be required to meet the special needs of the Aboriginal children.

Every special Aboriginal school should provide special facilities for vocational training, e.g. in rural work; in trades and crafts; in domestic sciences; in the use and value of money.

To remove the disadvantages of primitive backgrounds and, in many cases, to make their education possible at all, it has been advisable to establish hostels as living places for Aboriginal children. Parts of the education system provided for them included an organization to place Aboriginal youths and girls in apprenticeship or employment; to supervise conditions of employment, wages accommodation, etc., and maintain subsequent inspection and supervision until each child reaches an age and stage when it can confidently stand on its own feet as a social and economic unit within the Australian community.

Teachers of Aboriginal children require special qualifications and training and a special zeal in their approach to their tasks.

The educational of Aboriginal children is, therefore, obviously a field calling for more than the most that governments, of themselves, can provide. It is a field which may not necessarily offer large financial rewards (to individual Australians) but can offer tremendous opportunities for service in the best sense.

Employment

Assimilation of Aborigines should include the right to receive the same conditions as all other Australians for work of similar class, and the right to full membership of appropriate trade unions or professional associations.

Although these principles widely apply it is nevertheless obvious that Aborigines lacking economic and other skills comparable with other Australian workmen cannot obtain from industry the same rewards. To attempt to force equal rewards for them under such circumstances would militate against their own interests in that they could very easily be legislated out of employment.

This is a problem which demands the most sympathetic co-operation of employers. Like many of the other problems relating to the Aborigines, it cannot be solved by governments alone but, in the long run, can only be solved by conscious efforts and goodwill on the part of those other Australians who may be directly or indirectly concerned with it.

Government and Mission Stations

At the present time the continuation of government and mission stations is obviously part of the essential machinery in providing for the care, welfare and advancement of Aborigines. But the need for the continuation of these settlements should progressively diminish as the general standards of the Aborigines improve. Such stations and settlements are not places established for the purpose of dragooning the Aborigines in this direction or that for holding them stationary

at one point in their advancement to civilization. For many years to come, however, they will be needed and, if competently staffed and fully supported, can become one of the greatest formative influences in the advancement of the people and their preparation for a fuller life. The missions, too, have a Christian purpose. Here the growing child should be able to learn brotherhood in its richest meaning, develop character in its greatest strength and gain a faith by which to live.

Can These Problems be Overcome?

There is no evidence that, given equal opportunities, our Aborigines are not capable of the same achievements as other Australians. Indeed, there is positive evidence to the contrary and many individuals have shown themselves possessed of outstanding qualities. In 1801-3 Bungaree sailed around Australia with Matthew Flinders, who described him as "a brave and worthy fellow". Wylie accompanied the explorer Eyre 1,000 miles across southern Australia in 1841 and "his behaviour in all circumstances was admirable". Sir Thomas Mitchell described Yuranigh, a companion of his explorations in 1845-6, as of "determined courage, resolution, intelligence and judgment". Jacky Jacky saw ten of the thirteen members of Kennedy's exploration party die in 1848 and, after Kennedy himself was speared, first tried hard to save him and then stole away with news of the tragedy to the waiting ship. The Rev. James Noble, who died in 1941, was an Anglican missionary to his own people. Captain R. Saunders served with distinction with the A.I.F. in the Middle East, Greece and Korea. Pastor Douglas Nicholls, M.B.E., noted athlete, ordained minister of the Church of Christ, is an indefatigable worker for his race. Albert Namatjira, although the most renowned of them, was only one of a group of world-famous artists of the Aranda tribe.

What is the Scale of the Present Effort?

Expenditure by governments on aboriginal welfare now totals about £6,000,000 annually. Additional to this is the inestimable value of the work of missionaries. Over 740 Government officers are directly employed full time on Aboriginal welfare and many more are indirectly employed; well over 500 missionaries are also at work full time and others on a part-time basis. Approximately, for every 60 Aborigines or part-Aborigines subject to special legislation one other Australian is working full time. Some 79,500,000 acres are constituted as Aboriginal reserves.

There is Still Much to be Done

Government and missions are doing much, but the final answer does not lie only with them—it lies with the individual Australian. It is not a matter of passing resolutions calling upon this government

or that for action—or even of providing money (the distribution of which is the easiest and possibly the most barren form of charity). It is a matter of individual attitudes and efforts. Only members of the Australian community can make the newcomer to that community feel at home in it. The remarkable achievement of bodies such as the “Good Neighbour Councils” in helping to assimilate the “New Australians” from overseas might well be matched by communal and individual efforts to help the “old Australians” to realize the best of our own life and the best of their own individual capacities.

NOTES

Picture at right shows a school teacher of aboriginal descent in Western Australia instructing his pupils



